

Essential Statutes for AP U.S. Government and Politics

American with Disabilities Act of 1990 required public spaces and most employers to make reasonable accommodations for people with disabilities.

Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 set stricter limits on political action committees (PAC's) and individual donations to political parties and limited how money could be spent on so-called issue ads. Political operatives used the tax code to get around these restrictions with 527 organizations.

Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed racial discrimination in public accommodations based on Congress power to regulate interstate commerce.

Clean Air Act of 1970 requires the Department of Transportation to regulate automobile emissions standards.

Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974 designed to clean up federal budget process. Requires a budget resolution designed to control expenditures. Created Congressional Budget Office.

Federal Election Campaign Act of 1974 established Federal Election Commission, created public funding for presidential primaries and elections, set up disclosure requirements for campaign spending and donations.

Judiciary Act of 1789 is the original act organizing the federal court system. Recall Article III of the Constitution only specifies a Supreme Court and leaves it to Congress to establish all other inferior courts.

Judiciary Act of 1891 set up the U.S. Courts of Appeals, and reassigned the jurisdiction of most routine appeals from the district and circuit courts from the Supreme Court to these appellate courts. Because of this, it is sometimes called the **1891 Circuit Courts of Appeals Act**.

Motor Voter Act of 1993 required states to allow drivers license applicants to register to vote.

National Environment Policy Act of 1969 created the Environmental Protection Agency, the largest independent agency in the federal government. The act requires that environmental impact statements must be filed with EPA, or reports that specify environmental effects a proposed policy change would have.

National Security Act of 1947 reorganized the foreign policy apparatus of the federal government. Created the National Security Council and the Central Intelligence Agency. The next major national security reorganization took place in 2002 with the creation of the Department of Homeland Security.

No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 set up federal standards for public school student achievement and testing.

Pendleton Act of 1883 established Civil Service Commission, federal workers employed based upon competence not political patronage.

Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993 compelled the Supreme Court to use the compelling state interest test (strict scrutiny) in determining whether a policy violated free exercise of religion. The Court had ruled that laws of general applicability trumped free exercise, *Employment Division vs. Smith*, 1998. Supreme Court struck down this portion of the statute as unconstitutional on separation of powers grounds.

Social Security Act of 1935 created retirement entitlement program.

Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 prohibits Congress from requiring state or local governments to carry out Congressional mandates without proper funding.

Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT ACT) Act of 2001 passed shortly after the September 11, 2001 attacks. Grants broader powers to federal law enforcement to investigate terrorism. Has caused concerns by civil liberties advocates.

Voting Rights Act of 1965 designed to end formal and informal barrier to African-American suffrage.

War Powers Act (Resolution) of 1973 required President when possible to consult Congress before using military force. President must withdraw forces after 60 days unless Congress declares war. Presidents' believe the act unconstitutional.

Welfare Reform Act of 1996 created Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program to replace Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Set stricter limits on welfare benefits.